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## DAS tackles nursing shortage

By Donna Micklus

**D**AS Commissioner Barbara Waters publicly outlined a number of initiatives that DAS, along with other state agencies, has launched over the past year to address the nursing shortage in Connecticut.

"Recently accusations were made that the administration has not been proactive on the nursing shortage issue. Nothing could be farther from the truth," Waters said.

"We have been at the table working with the unions for months in an effort develop strategies to address the impact of the nursing shortage on the state, as well as to explore new opportunities for current state nurses. Attracting nurses to

the state workforce and retaining those already in the state's employ has been a mutual priority," Waters said.

DAS, together with sister agencies that employ nurses, and representatives from nursing bargaining units developed an educational incentive program that focuses internal efforts on "growing our own":

- Offer educational/career counseling to NP-6 bargaining unit employees interested in pursuing a career in the nursing field

- Offer psychiatric educational courses to members of P-1 bargaining unit and workshops to prepare nurses for the

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## Helping. . . drop by drop

By John McKay

**"I** want your blood" was the mantra heard in late August as DAS, in conjunction with the American Red Cross, hosted its first blood drive.

Organizers Julie Ahlstrin and Frankie Rivera even added a theatrical twist when they assumed the guise of vampires (Rivera photo above) to rally support and encourage folks to sign-up.

DAS volunteers started at 6:00 a.m. and worked throughout the day "without a hitch" in one volunteer's words.

Ahlstrin, who also coordinates First Responders, said, "The turnout was more than expected! The Red Cross anticipated 30 units and couldn't believe the SOB doubled those numbers."



Those giving blood in the past know that they are rewarded with a tasty snack. Food Distribution Program Director Doris Vieira asked US Food Service for support and received numerous items such as cold cuts, oranges, and pastries. FSC's Dan Donahue got donations from *Freihofers*, and enlisted the staff at CVH to make sandwiches.

Food not consumed was sent to the South Park Inn, an area shelter.

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## Nurses, cont.

Psychiatric Nurse Certification Exams

■ Provide LPN educational opportunities to members of the NP-6 bargaining unit

■ Provide educational opportunities for RN's to obtain their Bachelor of Science Degree in nursing in a manner that accommodates their work and life schedules

■ Provide educational opportunities for bargaining unit members interested in pursuing their Associates Degree in nursing.

DAS hosted a nursing summit back in April of 2001, the first step in developing a strategy to address a problem that is national in scope, spanning both the public and private sector.

"This isn't something we started yesterday...we have held nursing career fairs, done extensive advertising and recruiting, and we are constantly benchmarking our compensa-

tion system against industry standards, which shows that we are on a par, if not better, than private institutions," Waters said.

One of the steps that DAS took immediately was to create a special nursing website on the agency's home page.

Diane Fitzpatrick, who monitors the hits on the site said, "The website has been up and running for two weeks and has had over 2000 hits. We are getting contacted by lots of folks who are both interested in jobs and educational opportunities for nursing

careers. We are providing them with job information and having discussions with them about educational programs and resources. The responses to date have been very positive."

Waters offered special thanks to the efforts of Martin Anderson, Pam Libby, Heather Tweeddale, Diane Fitzpatrick, Diane Mazar Roberts, Patsy McLaughlin, and Carla Martin.

"The State of Connecticut didn't create this crisis, but our proactive steps over the past eighteen months prove that we are doing everything we can to alleviate it," Waters said.

**DAS**

## Blood Drive, cont.

In a thank you letter to DAS, Sally Benedict and Alina Gonzalez of the American Red Cross, wrote:

"We collected 62 productive units of blood which can help save the lives of 186 hospital patients. Additionally, it helped to increase our blood supplies going into a holiday weekend."

Praise from DAS employees came in from all over the agency - these are some of their comments:

From Dulcie Jensen, "It was just so convenient. I'll do it on a regular basis."

Lee Ann Rosborg started giving blood last year and this was her fourth time. "It's a very rewarding experience helping others," she said.

FSC's Mayme Casady is hoping to donate next time. "I couldn't believe I was rejected! I've changed my diet and now take multi-vitamins with iron. You learn a lot when you sign-up to donate blood," she said.



Signup staff L-R: Norma Sproul, Dept. Of Ed.; Sonji Fonseca, Julie Ahlstrin, Debbie Jeanfaivre of DAS, and Sally Benedict, Red Cross.

Fleet's Tom Yuhas said, "It's a good feeling knowing you could be helping someone in need." He also learned in talking with one of the Red Cross staff that before this blood drive, the Red Cross only had a 24-hour supply for the Hartford area. Hopefully, DAS has changed that.

Special thanks to FSC's Cheryl Drolet, who originally submitted the idea of the blood drive through the suggestion box, Wayne Thorpe, Sonji Fonseca, Norma Sproul, Francisco Rivera, Marisol Rivera, Elizabeth Lindee, Mary Ellen Vincent, Deborah Jeanfaivre, Carlos Kebe, and Kevin Nodwell, who all donated their time and effort to see that the blood drive was a success.

**DAS**

## **DAS Times**

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*Contributions are welcome but may be edited for space and clarity.*

Visit our website at  
[www.das.state.ct.us](http://www.das.state.ct.us)

Lisa D. Childress from Cuyahoga, Ohio praised **Bill Skyrme** for helping her obtain information on the DAS website regarding employment with the State of Connecticut. "People who respond and are helpful are another reason I want to move to Connecticut! Thank you again!"

Pedro Valentin thanked **David Swenson** and **Don Chaffee** for their "unselfish and professional assistance during a very difficult SEBAC budget and grant process."

Cathy Daly applauded DAS' **MIS Team** and the **Facilities Teams** for all of their efforts with computers for training purposes. "They have no summer help this year, and all this additional work had to be done with existing staff – and it's been handled very efficiently and professionally."

Martin Anderson commended **Tracie Knapsack** for "doing a superb job of pulling together and investigating 'my' numbers and crafting up a budget for my business center. Great job Tracie!"

Kenn Stephenson praised **Carolyn St. Paul**, **Jim Potyra**, and **Dan Barrows** for all of their "hard work over the past 12 months. From the various reports that are generated at this time of year it is easy to see that the PDC has been very successful for yet another year. Thank you for all that you do; you guys are great!"

Phil Karas thanked **Mary Stubbs** for coming to the rescue of his SEBAC client and getting her parking validated in a pinch. "Sometimes it's just the little things we do for the public that leave a comforting impression and show we care."

SEBAC client Diane commended **Phil Karas** for forwarding position information along to her. "You are a

most pleasant individual and a breath of fresh air. I appreciate your great disposition."

Pam Libby thanked **Janis Nome** and **Isabelle McKinney** for researching legislative history with regard to examinations. "I know you both are extremely busy, and I appreciate your willingness to do this so quickly. Thanks again."

A special thank you to **Maureen Blackburn** from Laurie Melesko and Paul Greco for assisting them with an incorrect link to the WIN newsletter that generated some phone calls. "Maureen put a message on our website under headlines (which she had never attempted to do before) to correct the error. Thank you for all your helpful and knowledgeable assistance. You're the BEST!"

Food Donations Coordinator Maurice D. Casey from Foodshare applauded all of the **DAS employees** for their donation of 275 pounds of food in July and for "helping Foodshare accomplish its goal of distributing safe, nutritious food to hungry people. Your donation, combined with others, will allow us to distribute a tractor-trailer load of food each and every day of the year! Thank you for being there with us as we work to find more food and to find real solutions to the problem of hunger in our midst."

Chief Administrative Officer Wayne Seabury and E-Government Internal Director Peter Sullivan from the Department of Information Technology praised **Chris Smith** "whose participation

has been instrumental to the development of enhancements of value to all Time Processing System (TPS) agencies. Chris oversaw DAS' transition to use of the TPS and along the way, identified many enhancements that improved the usability and integrity

## Hats Off

By Cindy Rusczyk

of the basic TPS. We look forward to continuing our current working relationship with DAS and Chris on TPS and future projects."

Phil Karas commended the **Picnic Committee** for all of their work "from the Beach Basket Raffle to the tuneful picnic setting...you guys did a scintillating job!"

Dan Donahue extended his thanks to "**Kevin Bachman**, **Steve Phillips**, and **Bill Larosa** of Fleet Operations for assisting Property Management in preparing shelving for the Governor's office records storage. Also, thanks to **Tom Yuhas** for always providing assistance when needed."

Janet Knopf praised **Fred Ondevilla** and the **Property Management staff** for the "quick and smooth turnaround during the MIS Team's multiple moves."

S. Derek Phelps from the Connecticut Siting Council commended **Mark Carroza** for his "very professional and impressive

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# Those kudos just keep on comin'!

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work with coordinating an RFP. Mark was extremely helpful, professional, responsive, thorough, and friendly every step of the way."

Suzanne Liquerman applauded **David Swenson** for all of his assistance with the State High School/High-Tech Infrastructure Grant application. "If it wasn't for David, his careful guidance, patience, and many hours of reading and editing, I would have never pulled this all together and had it in on time. He provided me with the tools to develop a proposal that clearly addressed the extensive information required."

The **Food Distribution Program** thanked **US Food Service** "for their contribution towards the DAS/Red Cross Blood Drive. Your generous support in providing the snacks, fruits, and sandwich meats for this important event is greatly appreciated. As our partner in the commodity program, we value your cooperation and dedication in customer service. Thanks again!"

Roy Dion praised **Nina Ritson** for the cover that she created for his capstone project report. "Fantastic job, and you made it look soooo easy. Art Paulette and I really appreciate your help. Thanks!"

Karen Halliday from the Department of Education contacted Commissioner Waters to commend **Kathleen Sullivan** and let her know how important she is to the Youth Leadership Forum.

"Karen couldn't say enough about your dedication, passion and professionalism" said Commissioner Waters. "She wanted me to know that they 'love you' and I told her that we do, too. Thanks!"

Diane Howard from Crafcro, Inc. emailed Don Casella to praise the **Procurement website**. "I downloaded a bid opening from your website yesterday and by the way, your website is awesome! I do the bids for Crafcro and see a few and this is one of the best!"

Linda Hubeny applauded **Dan Donahue** for his help on a Sunday with a high temperature problem in their Computer Room. "After contacting Solo Mechanical and finding out they would need access to the roof, you helped by making several calls and leaving pages with key DPW people. DPW came in and stayed until the air cooler problem was solved. Thanks again!"

After meeting with Larry Mayer from the Department of Correction, Don Casella stated, "Larry had a lot of nice things to say about our department. **Pamela Anderson's** acquisition of the plastic bag manufacturing machine in particular. He was extremely impressed!"

Daniel Moreland from the Governor's Office wrote a note of thanks to Commissioner Barbara Waters praising **Ruthie Hatten, Carol Smith, Frances Pisarski, Linda Shackett-Blue, Ted Feliciano**, and the entire **Print Shop** for "assisting in the

Governor's effort to stuff and mail nearly 3,000 Remembrance Day proclamations. Your employees were absolutely fantastic and a joy to work with. I cannot brag enough about how diligently they worked. It is clear that you have one of the best agencies. Again, many thanks."

Linda Shackett-Blue praised **Sue Cieniewicz** for all of her help in reprogramming and redesigning two Access databases. "This makes my life so much easier now, and makes some of my day-to-day tasks flow so much better. Thanks so much, Sue!"

Jeanne Gray and Dale Greenwood expressed their sincere appreciation to **Michelle Burns, Robin Riddlesworth, Shanta Kumar, and Jeanette Rheau** "for all their help with the scheduling and monitoring of the State Police Trooper Trainee Observational test. Knowing we could depend on them to address the details certainly took the pressure off of us, and because of their efforts, we were able to successfully test 914 candidates in just four days. It's great to work with such dedicated teammates."

Kenn Stephenson applauded **Robert Wallace, Lydia Rosario, Diane Donato, Jim Potyra, Carolyn St. Paul, Dan Barrows, Janis Nome, Suzanne Liquerman, and Eileen Morin** for "their attendance and their assistance at the opening meeting of the PDC Federal Nondiscrimination Onsite Compliance Review. You certainly made the meeting run very smooth. Several positive comments were made, and from the exit meeting, it appears the review went very well. Again, thank you all!"

# From military, to state, to community... service is what Loretta Miller is all about

Even after four years in Junior ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) in Southeast High School, Meridian, Mississippi, Loretta Miller knew upon graduation that she wanted to stay with the military.

Originally she wanted to go Navy, but took the Army test, and immediately embarked on her 21-year Army career.

Miller did her basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and then spent 2 years in California, two tours (5 years) in Germany, then on to Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia.

Loretta says, "I loved Germany - the food and wine were unforgettable, and the cities are extremely clean - streets are kept trash-free. It is so different from the cities in the United States. I would love to return to Germany for vacation someday."

After ten years, Loretta decided to pursue her education to become an officer. She ended active service and joined the Army Reserves, then enrolled at Central Connecticut State University through ROTC, studying toward a double major in Management Information Systems and Finance. She was also working part-time and raising her daughter, Latoria (now 23), full-time, while meeting her obligations to one, sometimes two weekends of service per month in the Reserves.

She worked in the private sector for several years until she came on board in state service, first at Revenue Services and then Motor Vehicles. Now she is a Reimbursement Analyst in the Delinquent Accounts Unit of FSC at DAS.

When asked how the Army helped shape her, Miller immediately responded, "I am grateful for the opportunity and proud to have served my country. It afforded me an opportunity to meet and work with people from different backgrounds and experiences.

It was an unbelievable experience and I miss it. I miss advising, training and developing young soldiers most of all."

She recommends joining the armed forces to any young person who is not quite sure where they are going after high school. She also suggests keeping both short and long-term goals.

"Stay with them, don't get easily discouraged, but it is important to be flexible, too." Although the Army gave her strength and discipline, she credits her grandmother for support, encouragement and positive direction.

"She provided guidance for me and instilled the importance of choice between right and wrong. I will always adore her."

Ironically, her interest and education in Finance not only found her working in FSC, but as a financial partner in an investment group as well. This proved interesting, a bit profitable, but after a while - extremely time-consuming. She does not offer advice on the current market except to say "DIVERSIFY and always be informed."

"I was shifting interests and wanted to commit more time to getting involved in my community."

Today, she is extremely active in many organizations: The American



FSC's Loretta Miller

Legion, the Civil and Human Rights Committee, and the Professional Development Committee for the A&R Union. Most notably, she is a longtime member of the NAACP and currently serves on the Greater Hartford Legal Redress Committee.

On October 6, 2002, at Riverfront Plaza beginning at 9 a.m., Miller will **Walk for Diabetes**, a three-mile walk to raise money for the fight against diabetes. She welcomes volunteers and donations...call her at 713-5462!

## Up Close

By Nina Ritson

But life isn't all work and no play for Miller. She recently returned from a week-long cruise to the Bahamas with friends, family, and her fiancé, a First Sergeant in the Army Reserves, and loved it. Miller smiles and glancing off to the side says, "Next year, I'd like to try for a Disney cruise and get more people together for it."

Though now a retired First Lieutenant, Miller said, "My work is not done here, there's still so much to do both in community service and in my personal life."

She is hoping to get involved in more organizations that benefit children in the Hartford area, and is also contemplating returning to school for her law degree.

# Set-Aside, P-Card are partners on the road

By John McKay

**T**hey're always looking to improve their business. So they double-teamed.

Set-Aside team members along with Procurement Card (P-Card) Coordinator Kerry DiMatteo hit the road to promote small businesses and P-Card usage.

The two offices first set their sights on the Fleet Garages.

"The garages are the biggest users of the P-Card," said Procurement's Lynn Peccerillo.

"If we could get Fleet employees to use the card at certified small businesses, we could really nail two birds with one stone," she added.

She said that DAS' Set A-Side program is always looking to sign up new small and minority owned business to their program.

The team of Meg Yetishefsky, Lynn Peccerillo, John Pacholski, Rob Zalucki, and Kerry DiMatteo began a road show to DAS' Fleet garages to reaffirm the benefits of the P-Card and stress the importance of using small businesses.

"The employees were all familiar with how easy the P-Card is to use, but didn't know how much help they could be to us if they used the card at certified small- and minority- owned businesses," said DiMatteo.

That presented a new challenge to the Set-Aside team.



Left: Kerry DiMatteo, Lynn Peccerillo and Meg Yetishefsky start their road show; Below right: Meg does an online demo; Below left: (L to R): Eduardo Flores, Lynn Peccerillo, Barry Graugard, Kerry DiMatteo, Thomas Yuhas, Meg Yetishefsky, Norman Townley, Calvin Halliday, and Joseph Holloway

"We noticed that the Hartford garage had plenty of businesses to choose from to boost local small and minority businesses, however Norwich has only one," said Peccerillo.

"Now we have a great opportunity to get more small businesses in that area certified with our Set-Aside program."

As a constant reminder to "think Set-Aside", the team gave the garages small, laminated cards that listed local vendor information including the vendor's address, phone number and contact person.

Kudos to Fleet's Joe Holloway for suggesting the company's commodity be listed on the card as well.

"It was educational for both sides to meet, put a name with a face, and answer questions," said DiMatteo.

"We're already getting a lot of positive feedback from Fleet employees because they realize that the P-Card is their best source of purchasing power," she added enthusiastically.

"This has been a very positive move for our office," said Peccerillo.



"Not only is there a good flow of communication between the two areas, but we now know where there is an area of focus to get small and minority business enrolled in our program. Even now, Fleet employees are phoning our office suggesting certain businesses to us to get them enrolled in the Set-Aside program. That's such a plus for everyone involved."

The team plans to do similar presentations to other DAS business centers over the next few months.

"This is the kind of teamwork atmosphere that we have been fostering at DAS, particularly over the past year with our 2002 projects...and this is an example of teamwork at its best!" said DAS Commissioner Barbara Waters.

**DAS**

# DAS reduces Fleet purchase, saving \$6 million

By Donna Micklus

## Victories

**I**n a budget belt-tightening effort, DAS announced it would cancel half of its Fleet automobile purchase for 2003, saving the state \$6 million.

Roy Dion, Director of Business Enterprises said that DAS, will cut its new car buy from 700 down to 350.

"Of course with maintenance costs, depreciation of cars, and a commitment to maintain current service levels to clients, there will always be the need to replenish vehicles," said Dion.

"But by reducing our new purchase by half, and maintaining the current fleet, we can save six million dollars for the state."

Steve Dygus who heads up Fleet Operations explained that DAS

had also changed its vehicle life cycle from five years to six years. "We estimate that this will save an additional \$1 million in taxpayers' dollars.

### *We're on a roll!*

The fleet cancellation is another in a recent series of DAS cost-saving initiatives.

In June, DAS' Property Distribution Center added close to \$740,000 back into state coffers with record proceeds from a state vehicle

auction, and by the end of the state's fiscal year in July, DAS' Financial Services Center, which collects monies owed to the state, had recovered more than \$744 million that went back into the state's general fund.

**DAS**

**700**



**- 350**



**= \$ 6 million  
in savings**

## Connecticut's Premier Vendor and Supplier Show

sponsored by the awesome staff of DAS Procurement Services



**Wednesday, November 13, 2002**

**8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

**Are you in the market for a product or services? Do you perform the purchasing function? Do you make the purchasing decisions? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you won't want to miss out on this opportunity to see the products and services that you can purchase directly from State of Connecticut contracts. Meet vendors and suppliers! Attend information sessions! And best of all, find out what is available to you at the great contract prices the state has negotiated!**

Register online at: [www.das.state.ct.us/ctshops/ctshops\\_attendee\\_form.asp](http://www.das.state.ct.us/ctshops/ctshops_attendee_form.asp)

DAS' first ever trade show will be held at the Connecticut Expo Center, 265 Reverend Moody Overpass, Hartford, CT

# Diversity Happenings

By Maureen Friedman

One of the objectives of the Diversity Council is to build enthusiasm and encourage respect for diversity throughout DAS. Your Diversity Council has been hard at work planning three special events with that objective in mind.

## Diversity Calendar

In October, an interactive diversity calendar will be available through Lotus Notes. Employees will be able to enter events, holidays and celebrations that reflect their heritage and culture.

This is an exciting opportunity for all of us to share information about our different backgrounds to help everyone in DAS realize

that our agency is strengthened by the contributions of a multicultural workforce.

Watch for an Infogram to announce when the calendar is ready to go.

## Diversity Survey Focus Groups

When the Diversity Council released the results of its survey recently, we indicated that focus group sessions would be held to give employees the opportunity to discuss the survey results and to solicit employee suggestions for strategies that may be adopted to address and improve the areas of concern.

These sessions will be your chance to work with the Diversity Council to make DAS the best it can be for all of us that work here.

These focus groups will be strictly voluntary and are planned for late in October, pending the Commissioner's schedule. We will

provide you with advance notice once the dates are set.

## Taste of DAS

The Second Annual Taste of DAS is coming!

This event was such a success last year that the Diversity Council decided we must do it again!

If you recall, we asked DAS employees to share food that represented their ethnicity, and the response was overwhelming.

We had food representing all corners of the world, from appetizers through desserts.

And we had people, representing all corners of DAS, enjoying it!

**This year's Taste of DAS will be held on December 5, 2002**, throughout the entire 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the State Office Building. Keep your eyes peeled for further details!

Bon Appetit!

# Surprise Guest Sweetens Charity Fundraiser

By John McKay



Supercow – the very huggable mascot of New Britain's Guida Ice Cream – greeted DAS employees at this year's Ice Cream Social, an annual event to raise money for the State Employees' Campaign for Charitable Giving.

Employees had the agonizing choice between vanilla or chocolate ice cream, strawberries and nuts, whip cream, sprinkles and other mouth-watering toppings.

"Everything in moderation...and I'll have a little bit of everything," said one employee who chose to remain anonymous!

"What a perfect afternoon treat," said committee member Aimee Gagnon. "And ice cream always gets people in the door for a fundraiser."

Isaac Eze (left) apparently would attest to that!

Kudos to committee members: Karen Rakowski, Jane Gore, Lawrence Gore, Nancy Jones, Alex Cacades, and Melissa Colonese for a job well done...raising \$387!!

# ONE YEAR LATER, DAS REMEMBERS 9/11

**WITH A MILITARY HONOR GUARD, WORDS FROM THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS, A PROCLAMATION FROM OUR GOVERNOR, A MOMENT OF SILENCE, AND TAPS.**

